

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6358

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

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AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5172

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR EGEN PINT EC

SUBJECT: SPEECH BY FORMER OAS SECRETARY GENERAL GALO PLAZA ON US-
LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS AND ECUADOREAN FUTURE POLITICS

REF: QUITO 5105

1. SUMMARY: IN A JULY 11 SPEECH WHICH WAS WIDELY PUBLICIZED, GALO PLAZA LASSO, FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS) COMMENTED BROADLY ON THE TOPICS OF US-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS AND THE FUTURE OF ECUADOREAN POLITICS. PLAZA STATED THAT A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE US AND LATIN AMERICA MUST CONTINUE AND THAT IT WOULD BE ABSURD TO CONSIDER EXCLUDING THE US FROM OAS ACTIVITIES. ADDITIONALLY, HE REMARKED THAT ECUADOR SHOULD BEGIN TO PREPARE THE NECESSARY POLITICAL STRUCTURES IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE POWER NOW HELD BY THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT. THE LOCAL MEDIA USED PLAZA'S SPEECH AS A VEHICLE TO ATTACK THE US TRADE REFORM ACT AND CALLED UPON THE UNITED STATES TO NOT ONLY ELIMINATE THOSE PROVISIONS CONCERNING ECUADOR AND VENEZUELA, BUT TO ESTABLISH INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS THAT WILL IMPROVE RELATIONS THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA. END SUMMARY.

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2. IN GALO PLAZA'S JULY 11 SPEECH, HE CALLED FOR A CONTINUED DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND LATIN AMERICA. STATING THAT SUCH A DIALOGUE IS INDISPENSIBLE, PLAZA COMMENTED THAT THE OAS SHOULD HELP TO CULTIVATE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND LATIN AMERICA, AND THAT ANY THOUGHT OF HAVING AN OAS WITHOUT UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE ABSURD. PLAZA CONTINUED THAT THE OAS WAS VITAL IN MAINTAINING THE JUDICIAL PRECEPTS THAT PROTECT THE WEAK COUNTRIES FROM THE STRONGER ONES. THE STRENGTH OF THE ORGANIZATION PLAZA SAID, DEPENDS ON THE MUTUAL INTERESTS OF THE US AND LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES.

3.COMMENTING UPON ECUADOREAN INTERNAL POLITICS, PLAZA REMARKED THAT IN HIS OPINION, THE PRESENT MILITARY GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WISH TO PERPETUATE ITSELF IN POWER FOREVER, AND THAT ECUADOR SHOULD PREPARE THE NECESSARY POLITICAL STRUCTURES TO ENABLE ITSELF TO RECEIVE POWER FROM THE MILITARY. PLAZA DECLARED THAT ECUADOR HAS BEEN LIVING IN A POLITICAL VACUUM AND THAT WHAT IS NEEDED ARE A FEW POLITICAL PARTIES WITH WELL-DEFINED IDEOLOGIES AND POSITIONS. HOWEVER, PLAZA CAUTIONED AGAINST THE WIDE PROLIFERATION OF PARTIES. MENTIONING THAT THE MILITARY HAS CONTRIBUTED MUCH IN THE HISTORY OF ECUADOR, PLAZA NEVERTHELESS STATED THAT THEY HAD TO INTERVENE IN TIME OF CRISIS DUE TO THE LIMITED POLITICAL CULTURE WHICH HAD NOT PERMITTED ECUADOREANS TO LIVE BY THE SACRED PRINCIPLES WHICH WERE INITIALLY SET FORTH IN THEIR VARIOUS CONSTITUTIONS. PLAZA CALLED FOR A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT.

4. MEDIA REACTION - THE MEDIA USED PLAZA'S SPEECH AS A VEHICLE TO ATTACK THE US TRADE ACT. EDITORIALS OF JULY 13 IN BOTH EL COMERCIO AND EL TIEMPO, WHILE AGREEING WITH PLAZA'S REMARKS CONCERNING THE NEED FOR A CONTINUED DIALOGUE, CHASTISED POWERFUL INTERESTS IN THE US CONGRESS FOR FRUSTRATING ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH SUCH A DIALOGUE. THE EDITORIALS CITED THE TRADE ACT AS HAVING NEGATIVE ASPECTS NOT ONLY FOR ECUADOR AND VENEZUELA, BUT HAVING FAR-REACHING IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER COUNTRIES IN LATIN AMERICA AS WELL. THE EDITORIALS FURTHER OPINED THAT THE UNITED STATES MUST CONVERT ITS WORDS

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OF UNDERSTANDING (CONCERNING THE RIGHTS OF LATIN AMERICA) INTO SOLID INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS, THEREBY ENSURING THAT FUTURE AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS WILL NOT GIVE WAY TO VARIOUS INTERNAL ECONOMIC PRESSURE GROUPS.

5.COMMENT: GALO PLAZA HAS TO BE COUNTED AS A "HEAVY" IN ECUADOR'S INTERNAL POLITICS -- AS A FORMER PRESIDENT WHO ACTUALLY SERVED OUT HIS ELECTED TERM OF OFFICE, AS

ONE OF THE WEALTHIEST OF ECUADOR'S WEALTHY, AND AS ONE OF THE FEW ECUADOREANS WITH GENUINE INTERNATIONAL STATURE. PLAZA MAY HAVE NATIONAL POLITICAL AMBITIONS, AND SOME BELIEVE THAT HIS RETURNING SPEECH WAS INTENDED TO SET THE STAGE FOR AT LEAST A TESTING OF THE POLITICAL WATERS. IF SUCH WAS THE CASE, HE GOT LEAD HEADLINES, BUT LITTLE MORE, FOR HE HAS NO POLITICAL PARTY POWER BASE, HAS BEEN OUT OF THE COUNTRY SO LONG THAT HE IS REGARDED MORE AS AN EXPATRIATE THAN A "GENUINE ECUADOREAN" BY MANY, AND IS SO CLOSELY TIED TO THE OLIGARCH (AND IMAGE THEREOF) THAT HE PROBABLY WOULD HAVE A HARD TIME IN ANY WIDELY CONTESTED (I.E. FULL OF NATIONALIST RHETORIC) ELECTION.
BREWSTER

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